

New Student FAQs

Welcome to the Department of Communication! We've put together this document of Frequently Asked Questions about the major and the department for students interested in joining the major. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Marianne Neal-Joyce, Director of Undergraduate Advising, at majoyce@umass.edu

What makes Communication unique? Why should I major in Comm?

We are Communication, without an 's' at the end, so are not focused on telecommunications, technical work, or 'how to.' Instead, we teach our students how to think, write, and speak clearly on a variety of topics. Our faculty are experts in a broad range of areas, including production, film studies, media literacy, social media, interpersonal/intercultural communication, policy, and cultural critiques, among many other areas. Our students are well-versed in current events, 'big picture' and detail-oriented thinking. The skills our students learn in their classes are transferable to a host of professional paths.

Tell me about your production courses.

The department has a broadcast TV and radio studio, a small TV studio, remote video and audio equipment, and 2 classrooms of digital editing suites. The department uses Adobe Suite editing programs which includes Premiere. Students in eligible courses are able to check out equipment as needed. Students do not need to buy any extra equipment. There are production courses focused on directing, screenwriting, documentary production, and TV production.

I want to go into advertising, marketing and/or public relations – but you don't offer those courses. Can I still get a job?

We do not offer practical, 'how-to' courses in marketing, advertising, or public relations. However, our students do absolutely still get jobs in these areas. The skills learned in our classes will be transferable to any professional job. Plus, we highly encourage internships and on-campus extra-curricular activities to start developing your professional skills. Unless you are planning to enter a very particular field (such as nursing, vet tech, or engineering for example), your diploma does not dictate your career. Building your professional skills through being involved on campus in extra-curricular activities, being connected to your coursework and faculty, and having a job and/or internships will build your professional skills, which will go a long way to gainful employment.

How does advising work in the Communication department?

All Communication students are assigned an advisor as soon as they join the major. We have a team of professional advisors, peer advisors, and a Director of Undergraduate Advising. Students are not required to meet with an advisor, but we strongly recommend they do so at least once, preferably twice (during add/drop and registration), each semester. Students have access to advisors' calendars and can make an appointment with whomever they choose. They can also drop in to see the peer advisors.

Are there campus opportunities for production work?

UMass has [UVC TV19](#) and [WMUA](#); these links will be able to answer all questions about student involvement.

Are there study abroad options? When is the best time for study abroad?

UMass has an extraordinary range of study abroad options - it's one of the advantages of being at such a big school. You will work with the [International Programs Office](#) to determine which program will be best and will work with a Comm advisor for course permissions. We encourage study abroad during the academic year, over winter break, or during summer – whatever works best for your schedule. Most students study abroad junior year, but it's possible to do it sophomore or senior year.

How do internships work at UMass?

As a UMass student, you will have access to a site called Handshake. This is where employers interested in college interns post jobs. You can also find an internship on your own. We post Comm-specific internships in our weekly newsletter. Our students have secured internships in a whole host of places, including gov't/policy work, nonprofits, advertising/marketing/PR, production, law offices, and many, many more. Students can receive university (not major) credit for internships and we are happy to support students in any professional development. We participate in some structured placement programs, such as our [SBS in DC](#) or [Mt. Ida](#).

Where do Comm graduates get jobs?

As a broad answer, our grads work in education, government/policy, non-profits, event planning, sports management, and advertising/marketing/PR. Many of our graduates go on to grad school, law school, or business school. Our students teach English around the globe, work in under-resourced communities, and join the Peace Corps.